



PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARRY BRYANT

Fort Douglas' statue of Patrick Connor presides over a soon-to-be closed, obsolete Army base.

Fort may get a new life as fusion-research center

But Nielson, Owens fear Hansen idea is premature

By Lee Davidson

Deseret News Washington Bureau chief

WASHINGTON — Fort Douglas — or at least part of it — may be converted from a soon-to-be closed, obsolete Army base to a center for high-tech fusion research.

Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah, made that suggestion Tuesday as the House gave the fort its execution orders — voting 381-43 to affirm plans to close the Utah fort and 85 other obsolete bases, partially close five others and realign duties at 54 additional bases.

All three Utah congressmen voted to close the bases and hailed the vote as a move to save money and help balance the budget. Opponents claimed it would not save much money and would destroy jobs important to their home districts.

Meanwhile, Reps. Wayne Owens, D-Utah, and Howard C. Nielson, R-

Results of closure

Positions affected: 409

Annual savings: \$250,000

How much land: 65 of 119 acres would continue in use by reserves.

Who stays: 100 active military would remain as reserve unit advisers.

Who goes: About 200 recruiters who would need office space elsewhere.

Utah, said Hansen's proposal for a fusion center at the fort was likely premature. But a University of Utah spokesman said he had told Hansen that using a portion of the fort for the center is a possibility the school might like to consider.

Hansen said in a statement pre-

pared for the Congressional Record that he has already introduced legislation designed to give closed portions of Fort Douglas to the U.

But, "With the recent nationwide attention the U. has received over the results of a fusion experiment conducted by Dr. B. Stanley Pons and a British colleague, Martin Fleischmann, I can think of no better way to use this land than to expand the fusion research capabilities of the university."

Bill Loos, director of governmental relations for the U., said Hansen had talked to him briefly about the idea.

Loos said if the university obtained the southeast portion of the base bordering the U.'s Research Park, the university might be interested in razing some old maintenance sheds there for use along with space in Research Park to build a

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interested in solving problems
on historic portions of the fort for
fusion research.

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President Chase) Peterson and Dr.
Pons about that. They encouraged us
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for the center until the concept is
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talk to them," he said.

Hansen and Owens have been
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Owens formed a task force with Salt
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Nielson joined Owens in worrying
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The flap over the possible fusion
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However, some members have
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sures by stopping the \$500 million
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Meanwhile back at Fort Douglas,
Maj. Bill Auer — base spokesman —
said closing the base will have few
negative impacts. He said the post is
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for use by the 3,000 Utahns serving
in military reserve units commanded
from the fort. "Relocating the re-
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pensive."

Auer said he had no data about
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tion of the base would actually result
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sure said sufficient land should be
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Auer said 100 of the 300 active,
full-time members of the military at
the base would remain to serve as
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would remain in the Salt Lake City
area using rented office space.

He said the few military members
whose jobs will be dissolved will be

or major reorganization

WASHINGTON — Here is a list of military installations in the
Western United States affected by the recommendations of the Com-
mission on Base Realignment and Closure, approved Tuesday by the
House.

The numbers after each installation indicate a loss or gain of jobs
and the amount of annual savings where any is expected.

ARIZONA:

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, reorganized, minus 506, \$3.05 million.

Fort Huachuca, minus 616.

Navaho Depot, closed, minus 5.

Yuma Proving Ground, reorganized, plus 277.

CALIFORNIA:

Beale Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 781.

George Air Force Base, closed, minus 5,358, \$70.2 million.

Hamilton Army Airfield, closed, minus 29, \$150,000.

Hunters Point Naval Station, reorganized, minus 4,225, \$8 million.

Long Beach Naval Station, reorganized, plus 461.

March Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 3,420.

Mather Air Force Base, closed, minus 3,000, \$78.7 million.

McClellan Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 231.

Norton Air Force Base, closed, minus 6,653, \$67.9 million.

Presidio of San Francisco, including Letterman Army Medical Center, closed, minus
5,290, \$74.08 million.

Salton Sea Test Base, closed, 0.

San Diego Naval Station, reorganized, plus 1,495.

COLORADO:

Fort Carson, reorganized, plus 700.

Lowry Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 386.

Bennett Air National Guard Facility, closed, 0.

Pueblo Army Depot, reorganized, minus 546, \$15.45 million.

IDAHO:

Mountain Home Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 1,949.

NEVADA:

Hawthorne Army Ammunition Plant, reorganized, plus 34.

NEW MEXICO:

Cannon Air Force Base, reorganized, plus 1,159.

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fusion research center.

He said the university is not now interested in using existing buildings on historic portions of the fort for fusion research.

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"We've kept close contact with (U. President Chase) Peterson and Dr. Pons about that. They encouraged us to not to propose any specific plans for the center until the concept is better developed. I guess Jim didn't talk to them," he said.

Hansen and Owens have been fighting over how to best decide what to do with the fort. While Hansen introduced his bill to give it to the U., Owens formed a task force with Salt Lake City Mayor Palmer DePaulis and Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah, to study all possibilities and recommend action.

Nielson joined Owens in worrying that Hansen's proposal was premature. "I favor giving the fort to the university, but I think the university should decide how best to use it."

The flap over the possible fusion research center came amid a last-ditch effort by some members of Congress to stop closure of bases in their home districts, and amid reports from a Fort Douglas spokesman that its closure really will not hurt the Army, Utah or base employees much at all.

The fight to stop the base closures was led by representatives from Illinois, New Jersey and California who were worried about bases in their areas. "In terms of savings, I don't believe they're there. In terms of expenditures, I believe they're underestimated," said Rep. Jim Saxton, R-N.J., who opposed the closure of Fort Dix in his state.

He and others claimed the plan would not — as the Commission on Base Closures and Realignment claimed — save \$694 million in the first year, or \$5.6 billion over 20 years.

"Maybe the recommendations of the commission won't save \$5 billion.

as some have suggested," Hansen responded. "Maybe there will be some initial pain back home in some districts. But I believe we all stand to gain in the long run if Congress can accept the fact that obsolete military bases should close."

In order to keep the bases open, both houses would have had to reject recommendations from the commission. With congressional endorsement of the recommendations, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney has the green light to proceed with closures beginning in January.

However, some members have talked about trying to block the closures by stopping the \$500 million appropriation needed to begin closing bases or challenging the constitutionality of the method Congress used to approve the closure.

Meanwhile back at Fort Douglas, Maj. Bill Auer — base spokesman — said closing the base will have few negative impacts. He said the post is proposing to keep 65 of its 119 acres for use by the 3,000 Utahns serving in military reserve units commanded from the fort. "Relocating the reserve units elsewhere would be expensive."

Auer said he had no data about whether retaining such a large portion of the base would actually result in much net savings. But he said the commission that recommended closure said sufficient land should be retained to handle reserve units' needs because relocating them would be expensive.

Auer said 100 of the 300 active, full-time members of the military at the base would remain to serve as advisers to reserve units. Most of the other 200 work as recruiters and would remain in the Salt Lake City area using rented office space.

He said the few military members whose jobs will be dissolved will be transferred to other bases. The few civilians who would lose jobs will likely be transferred to other similar government jobs in town or other Utah bases.

"The changes shouldn't be too drastic," he said.

Auer also said no decision has been made whether the name "Fort Douglas" will be retained by the portion of the base retained for use by the reserves. "It may just be called a reserve training center."